RECOMMENDATIONS

It appears that the pygmy rabbit could be a candidate for listing as a threatened species in the near future based on the very rapid loss of suitable habitat. To prevent this listing, I strongly recommend that the BLM, the major land holder of pygmy rabbit habitat in the State of Idaho, take the lead by initiating the following actions:

1. Inventory major blocks of undisturbed mature big sagebrush on BLM administered lands for the presence of pygmy rabbits. Special emphasis should be placed on Wyoming big sagebrush and basin big sagebrush sites.

2. Encourage Indians on the Fort Hall and Duck Valley Indian Reservations to cooperate in inventorying pygmy rabbits on their lands.

3. Encourage the Forest Service and Idaho Department of Lands to cooperate in these efforts.

4. Inventory all large (over 10,000 acres) recent burns and provide for re-vegetating them with big sagebrush and other native species.

5. Prioritize mature big sagebrush stands as highest priority for fire suppression activities on BLM administered lands.

6. Prohibit prescribed burning or other land altering activities on mature Wyoming big sagebrush or basin big sagebrush sites. Prescribed burning should be limited to mountain big sagebrush sites, only if there are no pygmy rabbits present.

7. Develop plans to restock suitable habitat from which pygmy rabbits have been extirpated.

8. Train all field personnel in the identification of pygmy rabbit habitat and their sign. Provide a written description of their habitat. Range conservationists would be the most helpful in gathering this information. Report findings to the appropriate wildlife biologist for verification.

9. Report all currently active pygmy rabbit burrow systems and actual sightings to the Conservation Data Center of IDFG.

10. Consider trades or purchases of private tracts of land that currently have pygmy rabbits.

11. Encourage private landowners to work with The Nature Conservancy and other land trusts in obtaining conservation easements on their lands if pygmy rabbits are present.

12. Support research on the pygmy rabbit from all accredited universities and other interested parties.

13. Determine the minimum acreage of suitable sagebrush habitat required to support minimum viable populations of pygmy rabbits.

14. Utilize the pygmy rabbit as the BLM range fire prevention symbol.

15. Form a working group of all scientists working on pygmy rabbits in the eight states where they are found to synthesize all of the available information about the species.

16. Consider proposing the species be listed as Threatened under the Endangered Species Act if this working group decides there is enough available data to support this conclusion.

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APPENDIX

Locations of currently active and recently active pygmy rabbit burrow sites found during this survey. Currently active burrows had fresh pellets and tracks in their immediate vicinity. Recently active burrows had only old pellets in their immediate vicinity.

	Drainage	**Latitude**	**Longitude**	**County**	**BLM FO Area**
PR-1 **	Divide Creek	44°26'16.6"N	112°41'08"W	Clark	Idaho Falls
PR-2 **	Pegram Creek	42°05'47.02995"N	111°11'32.09088"W	Bear Lake	Pocatello
PR-3 **	Pegram Creek	42°06'06.07701"N	111°10'37.79036"W	Bear Lake	Pocatello
PR-4 **	Juniper Draw	42°31'22.32535"N	115°09'44.63350"W	Owyhee	Owyhee
PR-5 **	Blue Creek	42°12'43.86360"N	116°11'43.79799"W	Owyhee	Owyhee
PR-6 **	Blue Creek	42°13'15.05470"N	116°13'12.39650"W	Owyhee	Owyhee
PR-8 **	Sheep Creek ***	42°08'23.38345"N	115°44'07.59775"W	Owyhee	Owyhee
PR-9 **	Twin Springs	42°15'47.52397"N	112°45'54.75587"W	Oneida	Burley
PR-10**	Salmon Falls Dam	42°12'35.81323"N	114°44'57.86037"W	Twin Falls	Jarbidge
PR-7 *	Sheep Creek	42°09'40.79566"N	115°44'26.69711"W	Owyhee	Owyhee
PR-11 *	Magic Reservoir	43°13'05.99380"N	114°22'09.95383"W	Blaine	Shoshone

* = Recently active pygmy rabbit burrow sites
** = Currently active pygmy rabbit burrow sites
*** = Two active burrow sites were found at this location, about 200 yards apart.